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**Greetings from MIT Hillel
 to Alumni, Parents, and Friends in Cambridge and Beyond...**

1. Christina Tringides '15, Inbar Yamin '15, and Max Plaut '14 take a selfie as MIT braves a blizzard.
2. Killian Court in snow. Winter has descended upon MIT...
3. MIT's Birthright bus makes a stop at the Kotel.

Executive Director's Update



Until about a week ago, we were thinking we might get off easy this winter at MIT and in Boston. Mother Nature has now reminded us we are definitely still in New England. At least the two official snow days so far were during IAP, and did not affect classes...

MIT's IAP, Independent Activities Period, in January is a calmer time on campus. No official academics. Fewer all-nighters (unless for non-class related fun like [MIT Mystery Hunt](#) or [MIT Battlecode Competitions](#) – for which we had a number of campus teams created by Jewish students). A bit more time just to hang out. It almost feels like any other American campus for a change.

Hillel staff took advantage of relaxed students just wandering the halls, and we created Jews and Java as a weekly IAP "event". It's amazing what a fully-stocked Dunkin Donuts gift card can accomplish. As students meandered around the Student Center, we called them over, offered them free coffee, and caught up on life, IAP, winter break... and their Jewish journeys. It was a very low-key, low-barrier activity, and reconnected us with many who had been overly-scheduled during the term.

One of the opportunities again available to our students each winter is Birthright, and another



successful bus made pilgrimage to Israel for this free 10-day trip.

Among the 12 MIT participants was freshman Allison Kaslow, who describes her experiences -- including taking on a Hebrew name -- in her column to the right. From camels to falafel, from politics to history, from praying at the kotel to having deep discussions with Israeli peers, the trip was an opening to deeper engagement with Israel and with personal Jewish identity. Reunions are already

being planned. And, it's already time to [register for our summer trip](#) -- including our unique [MIT Birthright Extension!](#)



Hillel advanced its educational goals during IAP as well. In addition to our regular Jewish educational lineup of classes, we co-sponsored a panel discussion with [Sinai and Synapses](#) entitled: "[Are we real when we are online?](#)" A rabbi, minister, and Harvard social media researcher delved into the ethics of anonymity and pseudonymity online – continuing Hillel's goal of exploring with our MIT community the ethical and moral issues raised by our scientific and technological advances.

Mentshn of Mention



Allison Kaslow '18
arkaslow@mit.edu

I'm from a small, primarily Christian, town called Lithia, which is located about an hour away from Tampa, FL. I have a lot of potential interests, but I'm planning on majoring in course 2A (mechanical engineering) with a focus on medical devices. Outside of the classroom, I am currently working in the Early Childhood Cognition Lab on a study that tests social cognition and theory of mind, a project that has potential applications to artificial intelligence. I am also heavily involved in GlobeMed—an organization that promotes health equality and community empowerment and collaborates with HIV clinics in Kara, Togo—and with my sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta. The majority of my time in the spring will be spent on the lacrosse field with the MIT Varsity team.

I was drawn to MIT after exploring the campus and surrounding city, learning about the interesting quirks of the Institute, and sitting in on a few lectures during my junior year of high school. I immediately felt that this was the university setting that I would enjoy and be challenged in the most.

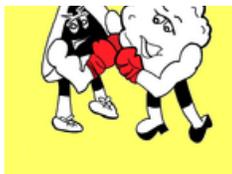
I first visited Hillel and learned about Birthright during freshman orientation. I had never strongly identified with my Jewish heritage, but since I've always had a passion

And, as our second major January snow storm hit, the new student board



And, as our second major January snow storm hit, the new student board spent two days on a leadership retreat. Mazal tov to President Tally Portnoi '17, Treasurer Jonathan Hurowitz '18 and VPs of Programming Evan Crane '17, David Dellal '17, Evelyn Florentine '18, Leah Slaten '18, and Dalia Walzer '17.

Our [annual Latke-Hamentaschen Debate](#) is Wednesday, February 11, 7:45pm in 10-250. Need a mid-winter laugh... a potato pancake, a triangle cookie, and some very creative professors are happy to provide.



L'shalom,
Rabbi Michelle Fisher SM'97
rabbif@mit.edu

Torah from Tech



Our Torah this month is taught by Paul E. Greenberg GM'88. Paul has been an economist at Analysis Group, Inc. since he graduated from the MIT Sloan School of Management. He lives in Brookline with his wife Marla and three children (Talia, Morris, and Micah). He can be reached at pegreenberg@gmail.com.

PARSHAT YITRO: "It's lonely at the top"

My connection to MIT started in the Fall of 1986 in the Master's program at the Sloan School of Management. For me, MIT and management lessons go hand in hand. So perhaps it is no surprise that when Rabbi Fisher asked me to contribute a column related to Parshat

Yitro, I immediately thought of Yitro's management lesson to his son-in-law, Moses. Seeing Moses trying to lead the Israelites alone, he says: "What you are doing is 'not good'" (לא טוב). Anticipating the great management gurus of our time, Yitro's sage advice is for Moses to delegate power so as to avoid leader burnout.

It turns out that the only other time this phrase -- לא טוב -- appears in the Torah is in Genesis when God says: "It is not good for man to be alone." Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks noted an important connection: "We cannot lead alone. We cannot live alone. To be alone is not good."

But sometimes a deeper lesson comes from connecting the learning from more than one vignette. In the prior Parshah, Moses relies on others to hold his tired arms up in the battle against Amalek. As long as his arms remain uplifted in a prayerful pose, the Israelites gain the upper hand; but as soon as his arms droop, the Amalekites prevail on the battlefield.

So Moses had already demonstrated a willingness to collaborate in achieving an important goal. If he tries to accomplish everything by himself, he will eventually fail. But Yitro's advice goes further, as he recognizes that **delegating** to others is not as natural as **collaborating** with others. Whereas collaborating allows you to share the load while staying involved, delegating involves distancing yourself from the task at hand while still maintaining full responsibility for the quality of the final results. Although the collaboration model seems to offer greater comfort in the face of loneliness, delegating responsibility to others provides greater opportunity for leverage. Yitro says: "Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you." In modern language, Yitro is the management consultant pushing Moses beyond his comfort zone as a leader.

With that as background, I can now finish my MIT Sloan School story. I met Marla Choslovsky, MIT Hillel's Director of Development, on the first day of class; last July, we celebrated our 25th anniversary along with our three children. Like Moses, I owe a great debt of gratitude to my father-in-law for his sage advice to Marla, in this case for her to marry a nice Jewish boy from Canada (he is from Winnipeg). This has led to our lifelong balance of collaboration and delegation.

MIT Hillel's 2015 Annual Fund Add to Jewish life @ MIT!



To our current and future supporters:

As the only staff member at MIT Hillel who is not involved in programming, sometimes I feel like a bit of an outsider. In my role I connect more to the past in meeting alumni and to the future in building our resource base than to the day-to-day Hillel activities of the present. And yet, I can see the impact of the work that goes on here. Highlights in my first year:

- I laughed at the Latke-Hamentaschen debate, and even though it was declared a tie, I must confess that I lean very far to the right in the latke

for exploration (I was extremely interested in travelling abroad for the first time) and was quickly enticed by the people at Hillel, I decided to apply. I was not sure that I even qualified considering that I had never even been in a synagogue before, but that fear was quickly dissolved after speaking with the wonderful people organizing the trip.

When I found out that I had been accepted into the Birthright program, I was ecstatic. I looked forward to the opportunity to learn more about Judaism and connect to my Jewish roots, but most of all I reveled in the opportunity to travel to Israel. While there, I discovered that the experiences I was having were ones I would cherish forever. I fell in love with the intricacies of Israeli culture, the extensive history of my ancestors, and the beauty of the cities and towns we visited. I was surprised by how well I connected with the land and how close I became with everyone on my trip. It was the first time that my Jewish background came to the forefront in my life. I even decided to participate in the naming ceremony and adopt a Hebrew name.

Birthright helped spawn my appreciation for Judaism, and it sparked so many new questions about its traditions and customs. I am excited to enhance my MIT experience with future involvement in the remarkable Jewish community that I have found here.

Thank you for supporting MIT Hillel!

Your generous support allows us to help keep Jewish life vibrant on the MIT campus!



camp.

- Passover seders were overflowing, largest attendance in recent years.
- The Yom HaShoah program on "What Happens When Technology Is Used for Evil" stunned me in its depth and particularly relevant approach for the MIT community.
- Two different student-led minyanim welcomed me when I needed to say kaddish.
- Leading Jewish Minds introduced me to amazing speakers and a wonderful core of local alumni and faculty supporters, and my travels with Michelle allowed me to meet so many people who value MIT and MIT Hillel.
- I saw first-hand how the program staff know – and care about – each and every student. They help students connect with Judaism and with community, learn how to lead a group, deal with personal crisis, be a positive voice for Israel, and more.
- So it was not a surprise to me when our own [Rabbi Michelle Fisher was honored](#) by Hillel International with the Richard M. Joel Exemplar of Excellence Award. Please join me in congratulating her for this recognition of her work to date. With your support, she will continue to lead MIT Hillel for years to come.

We invite you to [join us this year](#) in supporting Jewish life on campus. Here is an [overview of our needs](#) this year. We are always happy to meet with donors in person, to learn why MIT Hillel is important to you and to talk about why your support makes all the difference.

On a personal note, that's my husband who wrote the Torah from Tech column! We met during our first week on campus, as Sloan students. When I told my dad, who hails from Winnipeg, that 30% of the class was foreign – a big number in 1986 – he suggested that I try to meet a nice Jewish boy from Canada. I scanned the facebook – a real paper book of faces back in the olden days, and Paul Greenberg from Montreal fit the bill. I subsequently introduced myself.. and with a forthright style like that is it any surprise that I ended up in development?

It is an honor to join with you in maintaining and building a strong Jewish presence at MIT.

Thank you,
Marla Choslovsky SM'88,
MIT Hillel Director of Development
marla360@mit.edu

[Add your name](#) to MIT Hillel's 2015 Donor Roll!

Tamid Initiative - Planned Giving @ MIT Hillel

Endowment and planned gifts truly sustain and build an organization. MIT Hillel is excited to help you create your personal Jewish legacy at MIT.

We invite alumni and friends who care deeply about Jewish life at MIT to consider joining the Institute's **Katharine Dexter McCormick (1904) Society (KDMS)** and be part of the **Tamid Initiative** by making a bequest to MIT, for the benefit of MIT Hillel. Your generosity will help MIT Hillel engage today's students, securing our Jewish future with confidence.

To inform us that you plan such a gift, download and send us a [pledge form](#).

MIT and MIT Hillel are eager to help you meet your objectives. For more information, please contact MIT Hillel Director of Development, Marla Choslovsky, marla360@mit.edu.

On the Calendar

Leading Jewish Minds @ MIT Spring line-up

- **Friday, February 6** – Mike Sipser, Dean of Science and Barton L. Weller Professor of Mathematics
- **Friday, March 20** – Felice Frankel, Research Scientist, Center for Materials Science and Engineering
- **Friday, May 1** – Alan Guth, Victor F. Weisskopf Professor of Physics and MacVicar Faculty Fellow

MIT Hillel presents
LEADING JEWISH MINDS @ MIT
A Lunchtime Seminar Series for MIT Faculty, Staff, Alumni/ae, and Friends

Beyond Computation: The P Versus NP Question
Featuring
Michael Sipser
Dean of Science
Barton L. Weller Professor of Mathematics

What are the theoretical limitations of computer power? The great logician Kurt Gödel first raised this question in 1956 when he asked his brilliant mathematical and computer pioneer, John von Neumann whether certain computational problems could be solved without resorting to a brute force search through many possibilities. In so doing, he introduced the P versus NP question, one of the major unanswered questions of contemporary mathematics and theoretical computer science. An answer would reveal the potential for computers to solve puzzles, crack codes, prove theorems, and optimize many practical tasks.

Michael Sipser joined the MIT faculty in 1980, and served as Head of MIT's Department of Mathematics for a decade before becoming Dean of Science last year. He was a Lady Davis Fellow at Indiana University and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His research interests are in algorithms and complexity theory. He has authored many papers and the widely used textbook, *Introduction to the Theory of Computation*.

Faculty Hosts: Daniel Jackson, David Mindell, Joel Moses

Friday, February 6, 2015
12:30 - 2:00pm
State Center, 32-0463
Silo Conference Room
Kosher Lunch Provided \$10
RSVP by Monday, 3/2:
info@jewishminds.org
617-253-2982

Leading Jewish Minds @ MIT is an initiative to build and strengthen MIT's Jewish community.

Annual Latke-Hamentaschen Debate: Wednesday, February 11, 7:45pm, MIT 10-250

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